

AUGUST 11 2021 Adam Dove

A different kind of holiday greeting for business

As we move forward together into a post-COVID future, we all have to rethink many of our usual practices. One way we've done this is by turning our traditional holiday gift for our clients into an opportunity to help.

The pandemic has been particularly difficult for members of the Black community. Not only was this community disproportionately affected by COVID-19, but they also face continued violence and oppression. As a strategy and design firm, we're accustomed to thinking in terms of systems. Systemic racism is one of the most insidious of these—which has only become more entrenched in the past year.

In rethinking our traditional practices, we turned our usual holiday greeting into an opportunity to help. This winter, we offered our clients the chance to direct a contribution to one of three local organizations. Each one is committed to improving the quality of life for Pittsburgh's Black residents. Each organization received strong support, so we provided each with funds to help create opportunities for Black youth and families.

Check out the three incredible organizations we had the opportunity to support.

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Homewood Children's Village

The community of Homewood makes up one square mile of Pittsburgh's East End. Due to decades of systemic displacement and disenfranchisement, the community is now mired in a cycle of poverty and disinvestment. The Homewood Children's Village is a grassroots organization that aims to end this destructive cycle. They invest in future generations of Homewood and equip them with the tools they need to thrive. They've built their programs on a "Cradle to Career" model, which begins at birth and goes through post-secondary education. They provide the children of Homewood with educational resources to help support their physical, social, and emotional wellbeing. Their model establishes a "2 Generation Framework," informed by numerous scientific theories of child development. This framework helps to build a strong foundation for the child, the parent, and the community.

Community Empowerment Association

The Community Empowerment Association began in the early 1990s to take a structural approach to empowering Black communities. Their programs address the needs of at-risk children and families in Pittsburgh's marginalized communities. Their work instills in these communities an Afrocentric Paradigm, which centers Black people as the subjects of their own stories. This paradigm builds self-esteem and identity in Black youth, while building their ability to hope and plan for the future.

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Their initiatives in Youth Intervention & Prevention, Workforce Development, and Behavioral Health & Wellness, form a holistic approach to community development. This approach aims to address both the economic and mental health struggles of the community.

YouthPlaces

YouthPlaces works to inspire youth and empower them to succeed. They give teens the tools they need to succeed in school and grow into their careers. They do this through a wide range of programming such as school programs, sports leagues, college planning, and career exploration. These programs acknowledge that underserved youth face many obstacles to success. But YouthPlaces knows that by investing in their strengths and providing the necessary tools along the way, they can successfully transition to adulthood. What's more, these programs provide them with a safe space outside of school while their parents are at work. A space where they can relax, thrive, and be themselves.